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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Letter dated 11 June 1993 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the letter from His Excellency Mr. Vladislav Jovanovic, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, addressed to you (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 79 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/48/50.

ANNEX

Letter dated 11 June 1993 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia addressed to the Secretary-General

Highly appreciative of your experience and authority, I am writing to ask you kindly to intercede to bring about the implementation of the Agreement on the Exchange of Prisoners of War concluded between the Governments of the Republic of Croatia and of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Budapest on 7 August 1992. The implementation of this Agreement has been stalled primarily by the refusal of the Government of the Republic of Croatia to fulfil the commitments it has undertaken.

Proceeding from an unfounded allegation that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia committed aggression against the territory of the Republic of Croatia (Armed conflicts started with the aggression of the Republic of Croatia against the Serb people and have taken place exclusively in the territories which historically and ethnically belong to the Serb people and have never been part of an independent Croatian State.), the Croatian Government is pursuing ethnic cleansing and committing genocide in the territory under its control, violating thus the basic principles of humanity and international law. The Government of the Republic of Croatia has taken the same attitude also in respect of its commitments emanating from international conventions on prisoners of war and the agreements with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the Exchange of POWs. I therefore wish to draw your attention to the following:

- Although it has undertaken to provide the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) with a list of all POWs in its territory, the Croatian Government has not done that yet. More than 1,000 POWs, on whom there exist reliable data, have not been registered with the ICRC. The competent Yugoslav commission for the exchange of POWs has informed the ICRC of this fact.

- The lists of POWs submitted to the ICRC by the Republic of Croatia include civilians of Serb nationality from territories in the Republic of Croatia in which there have been no armed hostilities. Because of their Serb nationality and Orthodox religion, these persons were arrested, maltreated, proclaimed POWs and offered for exchange. A number of these persons do not want to be exchanged, refusing to give up their property in the Republic of Croatia. The Croatian side put these persons back in prison, subjected them to torture and offered them for exchange again. This is a glaring example of ethnic cleansing and unlawful seizure of property.

- During the armed conflict and in its aftermath, 220 former JNA soldiers, citizens of Yugoslavia, were killed or died from the consequences of torture in prisoner camps and prisons controlled by Croatian authorities, while thousands were maltreated, beaten and humiliated in a manner unrecorded in the history of past wars. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will release a statement on war crimes against POWs soon.

- The Croatian side refused to exchange or provide appropriate information about the destiny of 50 former JNA soldiers taken prisoner and held captive in prisoner camps in Split, Slavonski Brod and elsewhere. It is believed that the Croatian authorities have killed them, committing thus the most serious crime against humanity and violating the Geneva Conventions on POWs.

- The President of the Republic of Croatia has not replied to the letter of the President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, requesting that the two Presidents intercede in the release of remaining POWs.

Because of such an attitude of the Croatian side to the implementation of the said Agreement on the Exchange of POWs, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has informed the Croatian side and the ICRC of the following:

- The Yugoslav side has released all POWs in its territory;

- The Yugoslav side will do its utmost to exchange - release an additional 17 persons in its territory, although they do not have POW status. These are the persons convicted for committing criminal acts outside combat zones and terrorists infiltrated into the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for the purpose of mining the bridge on the Danube and committing other terrorist acts.

- The Yugoslav side is still prepared, for confidence-building purposes, to have a tripartite commission, consisting of representatives of the Republic of Croatia, ICRC and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, tour the sites in Yugoslavia where, according to the Croatian Government, POWs or other arrested citizens of Croatian nationality are kept and to inspect their condition (No such camps exist in the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.). It would be appreciated if the Government of the Republic of Croatia displayed such readiness in respect of the camps for POWs and citizens of Serb nationality existing in the territory of the Republic of Croatia.

Since the Yugoslav side has fulfilled its commitments under the Agreement on the Exchange of POWs, I appeal to you to use all your authority and influence to have the Republic of Croatia fulfil its international commitments without delay and to exchange all POWs.

I also call upon the international community to bring pressure to bear on the Republic of Croatia to provide information about the destiny of 50 former JNA soldiers taken prisoner, for whom there exists reasonable doubt that they not only were tortured, but even killed in Croatian camps. Pressure should also be brought to bear on the Republic of Croatia to stop ethnic cleansing in its territory by arresting citizens - civilians of Serb nationality and putting their names on POW lists in order to exchange them. And finally, it would be

very useful if, under Your Excellency's guidance and authority, the international community assisted in establishing an effective service for searching missing persons in the territory of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIĆ
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister
of Foreign Affairs